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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KIRKUK 000105

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SUBJECT: PUK ASAYISH CLAIMS SECURITY DOMINANCE IN KIRKUK

KIRKUK 00000105 001.2 OF 002

CLASSIFIED BY: Scott Dean, Regional Coordinator (Acting), Reo Kirkuk, Department of State .

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶11. SUMMARY. The PUK chief of Asayish (internal security) in Kirkuk complained that the MNF-I and Iraqi Army did not recognize the Asayish as a formal security force below the greenline and expressed frustration that the Asayish had to obtain MNF-I permission prior to making an arrest. He claimed Kirkuk minorities without militias relied on Asayish for security. He argued that Kirkuk police employed terrorists, and that investigating judges were releasing suspected criminals without proper prosecution. Sadrist militia members are organizing secretly in Kirkuk. END SUMMARY.

Asayish Dominant Security Force in Kirkuk

¶12. IPAQ on April 20 met Halkawt Abdullah Aziz, chief of PUK Asayish (internal security) for Kirkuk province, to discuss security issues in Kirkuk. Aziz complained that the MNF-I and Iraqi Army did not recognize the Asayish as a formal security force below the greenline and expressed frustration that the Asayish had to obtain MNF-I permission prior to making an arrest. He argued that most Kirkuk residents had more confidence in the Asayish than the police to capture terrorists and bring them to justice. For example, Aziz told us that Kirkuk's deputy police chief called Aziz a day earlier, requesting that the Asayish detain terrorists the police had identified. The deputy police chief allegedly feared that if the police captured the terrorists, the terrorists would be released, due to ethnic sensitivities.

¶13. Aziz claimed Kirkuk minorities without militias relied on Asayish for security. He said the Iraqi Turcoman Front (ITF) wanted to create a security apparatus but were unable. Aziz said MNF-I forces in the past had raided ITF offices and confiscated weapons. He reported that some Turcoman forces were working along side the Asayish to improve security. Aziz claimed that Arabs and Turcoman entities sent his office letters of appreciation following Asayish roundups of terrorist cells.

Kirkuk Police, Investigating Judges Corrupted

¶14. Aziz contended that Kirkuk provincial police had terrorists within its ranks. He said that recently a police leader in the Za'ab area was charged with terrorism. Aziz alleged that the Kirkuk police had yet to arrest one terrorist cell. He described investigating judges as biased, stating that many were

connected to Ba'athists in Baghdad. He told us that Kirkuk police authorities publicly reported that investigative judges had released suspected criminals without proper prosecution.

Shia Arabs Encroaching on Kirkuk

15. Aziz reported that Shia Arabs were migrating to Kirkuk, although not in droves. He said most were staying with relatives at this point and were not causing problems. Aziz confirmed other reporting that Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) regiments were moving to the Kirkuk area. He said the JAM was organizing secretly in Kirkuk. Aziz said that if the Kurds had less of a

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handle on security and were not as close to the MNF-I, the JAM would stir up lots of problems in Kirkuk.

Comment

16. Aziz repeated many of the same themes discussed in a previous meeting with the KDP Asayish chief in Kirkuk (REFTEL). Aziz tried to drive home the message that the Asayish was the only Iraqi security force in Kirkuk that was effective and that we needed to recognize it as such. He shared Asayish success stories in recently capturing terrorist cells in Kirkuk, Tikrit, Tuz, and Alton Copri. Aziz, like other Kurdish contacts, hinted at what other Kurds deem as a soft MNF-I approach to prosecuting suspected criminals.

Biographic Note

17. Aziz was born in 1959 and joined the PUK in 1982. He has held various positions within the peshmerga. Aziz graduated in 1988 from Qalacholan College for Military Science. Prior to OIF, Aziz fought with the peshmerga forces against Ansar al-Islam near Iranian border of Iraqi Kurdistan and was wounded five times during battle. During OIF, Aziz accompanied the

KIRKUK 00000105 002.2 OF 002

first group of liberation forces into Kirkuk.
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